Coolidge the Spirit of New England; Devotion to Duty the Governor's Creed

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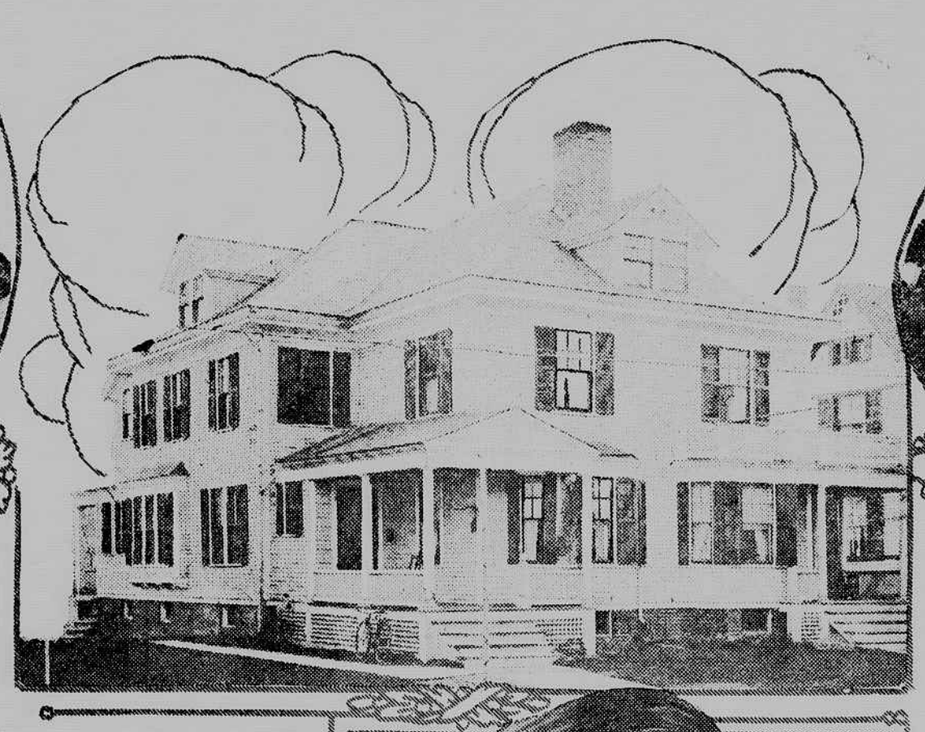
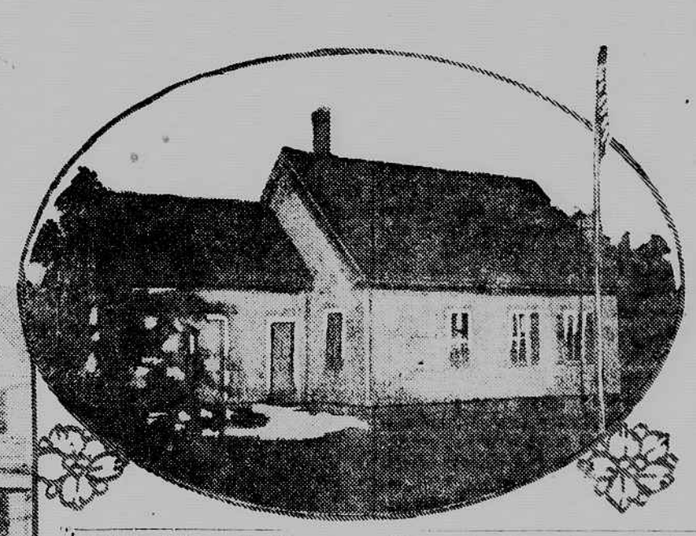
GOVERNOR CALVIN COOLIDGE, with his wife and their two sons



GOVERNOR COOLIDGE and his family live in half of this double house, paying $32 a month rent



THE little schoolhouse at Plymouth, Vt., where Calvin Coolidge got his first education

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A CLOSE-UP of Governor Calvin Coolidge of Massachusetts, Republican choice for Vice-President

By Quinn L. Martin

EVERY American capable of reading the English language has read the name of Calvin Coolidge within the last few months. Most every one knows why he has read that name. Law and order, Americanism and no quibbling, uprightness and honesty—these things have made this man's name known to his countrymen and to the peoples of other lands as well.

Now, what of the man? What is he and who is he? How does he act and look and think and live? From what may be seen of him and learned of him by looking at him and talking with him one must, to be truthful, resolve that he is the ordinary man, the honest, conscientious American, thinking a great deal the same as all of us think, yet endowed with that fine trait of being able to speak when the time is right and be silent by the same rule.

So, come along and look at Calvin Coolidge.

A New England Type

At a distance of twenty feet, the space between his desk and the door leading from his secretary's room, his face, so perfectly at ease, so firmly chiseled, so resolutely set, and his hair so carefully brushed back from his forehead, and his coat lapels and his white collar and his tie so painstakingly arranged, bring to mind the splendid old figures in metal that adorn the parks and squares of Boston and other New England towns, and make one wonder if this individual is ever going to move or is just going to sit there, reading the sheet of paper beneath his eyes on the desk, without giving one an opportunity to have a word with him.

But his head has been raised, a smile comes quickly over his face, and it isn't his eyes or his mouth alone, but his entire face, breaks into this smile, and you step nearer, your hand extending to meet the big, strong, white hand of Calvin Coolidge, and you feel your palm compressed as if it had been grasped by a pugilist.

There are a great many politicians and professional handshakers who pride themselves in perfecting the shaking of the hand to such a degree that they can go through an entire day's session of nothing but grasping hands and at the end of the day feel not at all fatigued. This is done simply by obtaining the first grasp on the other fellow's hand and catching it far down toward the finger tips, thus making it impossible for the second party to do any real squeezing. It is the twisting of one's hand by others that tires, and not the actual business of heaving and pumping on one's own part, it is said.

This trick either has not been learned by Calvin Coolidge, or else it has been learned by him and cast aside as a thing not to be proud of. You guess almost instantly that the latter is the case.

He will bend rather stiffly, leaning over his desk, and say:

"I am indeed glad to meet you," still standing, and then he will step back, still looking at you, to his chair. Sitting down, he will straighten his coattails out to the sides so he will not wrinkle them by sitting upon them and then will lean over to one side, open a drawer, pull out a box of cigars, open the lid, then the paper cover, shake them up so they may be extracted easily, place the box on the desk, push it over with his left hand, all the while looking into the box, then raise his eyes again and say:

"Will you smoke?"

Fears to Presume

And he says it with a voice and tone that make you know that he doesn't know whether he has presumed too strongly or not, and as you take one he grins and places an ash tray and a match case near you and settles back into his chair, deep into the bottom of it, his two hands clasped and at his chin.

At this juncture you think, while lighting your cigar, you will peer through the match blaze and see what he is doing. And your eyes meet his eyes. He is looking, too.

No glances are stolen from Calvin Coolidge. He gives you as thorough an inspection as any second lieutenant ever gave a doughboy. And you like it. A man like Calvin Coolidge is interested in your appearance. You hope, in case you are in perfect trim, that he will continue to look. He doesn't look only at your hair and your eyes. He looks at your shoes, and he will twist about a little to see if the crease in your trousers runs well all the way down.

Is a Tidy Man

Now, I have heard it said of the Governor of Massachusetts that he was born and reared a farmer and was to all appearances a very slouchy man. The fore part of this charge is true. The latter is not. Magazine articles have gone to great lengths to tell how carelessly he comes to his office some mornings, with hair awry and needing a shave. That is not true. Just the contrary is the case.

It is entirely true that he has been a farmer. And he and every one else in Massachusetts is proud of it. But if by saying that Calvin Coolidge has risen to the eminence which he now enjoys through having lived the life of a tiller of the soil, never to have shed his overalls and his red bandanna handkerchief, one is to believe that he still carries on his duties as Executive of his commonwealth with an appearance of slovenliness and carelessness, then a wholly erroneous idea is given.

Extremes are not usually pleasing, but one is convinced when he faces Governor Coolidge that he has never seen a finer specimen of personal cleanliness. He is immaculately dressed. By that is not meant that he shines. He does not. He wears clothes that fit him and his shirts are snowy white. His neck and face and hands are so pink and clear as to give one the impression that he has just had a massage or has scrubbed his face with a rough, soapy wet towel until it stings. But he has not. It is the healthy skin and his cleanliness.

Utter silence—that is the first thing that impresses you. Much also has been written of that. It is true. His first remark, unless you are on your guard, will be lost entirely. And you lean closer and ask him if he will repeat it. And he, quite accustomed to the procedure, I suppose, will repeat it without the slightest change in tone, and you catch it because you have listened more intently.

"The boys," he will say, meaning the Boston newspaper men, "aren't much impressed with me from the talking standpoint." He has realized you are eager to get his words and he will smile, and you don't feel so embarrassed, because it does not seem just proper to ask a man like this to repeat every other line he utters.

There is no "actor" in him. He is so natural at all times as to rather invite his visitor to talk on subjects the visitor knows are nearest to the Governor's heart. It requires years for most men to appear so perfectly at home with visitors and so lacking in stiffness as Calvin Coolidge is at your meeting with him. This is personality. This fine man whose words so strengthened Americans everywhere in the days of the great war is a personality in himself. There is no duplication of him. Personality, Calvin Coolidge personality, pervades his desk and his office.

"As a man worships so shall he be," has been one of his phrases for a long time. And remembering that, one thinks this man certainly must practice what he preaches and that he must have an ideal somewhere, a great, strong, silent ideal, in whose footsteps he would follow. And then you remember Abraham Lincoln again. It is natural for you to do that. Then you remember Calvin Coolidge's words as he spoke on Flag Day, saying:

"Works which endure come from the soul of the people. The mighty in their pride walk alone to destruction. The humble walk hand in hand with Providence to immortality. Their works survive. He who lives under it and is loyal to it (the American flag) is loyal to truth and justice everywhere. He who lives under it and is disloyal to it is a traitor to the human race everywhere."

More evidence of his devotion to the spirit of Abraham Lincoln may be found in these words, spoken by him in his Lincoln Day proclamation, delivered January 30, 1919.

Tribute to Lincoln

"Fivescore and ten years ago that divine Providence which infinite repetition has made only the more a miracle sent into the world a new life, destined to save a nation. No star, no sign foretold his coming. About his cradle all was poor and mean, save only the source of all great men, the love of a wonderful woman. When she faded away in his tender years, from her deathbed, in humble poverty, she dowered her son with greatness. There can be no proper observance of a birthday which forgets the mother. Into his origin, as into his life, men long have looked and wondered. In wisdom great, but in humility greater; in justice strong, but in compassion stronger, he became a leader of men by being a follower of the truth. He overcame evil with good. His presence filled the nation. He broke the might of oppression. He restored a race to its birthright. His mortal frame has vanished. But his spirit increases with the increasing years, the richest legacy of the greatest century.

"It is no accident that before the great example of American manhood our people stand with respect and reverence. And in accordance with this sentiment our laws have provided for a formal recognition of the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, for in him is revealed our ideal, the hope of our country fulfilled."

On the face of Calvin Coolidge is the stamp of sound Americanism. As he sits there you picture in your mind a well drawn and serious sketch of Uncle Sam without beard. He is of that strong, virile, silent, stern, kindly make-up. His face is a mirror of his thoughts. You almost can hear him saying again, as he did on April 22, 1918, in the heat of war:

"Wrong Never Won"

"The nation with the greatest moral power will win. Of that are born armies and navies and the resolution to endure. Have faith in the moral power of America. It gave independence under Washington and freedom under Lincoln. Here, right never lost. Here, wrong never won. However, powerful the forces of evil may appear, somewhere there are more powerful forces of righteousness. Courage and confidence are our heritage. Justice is our might. The outcome is in your hands, my fellow Americans. If you deserve to win, the nation cannot lose."

But let us look closely at Governor Coolidge and see just what sort of looking man he really is.

His hair, a very light brown or red, if you like, is parted on the left and roached back over the top on the right side. It is coarse and is not clipped around the edges. It is brushed back above the ears, and the ends at the back of the head won't hold their place always, but stick up slightly like the long grown mop of a boy in his swimmin' hole days after a duck in the old mill pond.

His high, clear forehead has no wrinkles. And his face is of that peculiar well preserved type of pink that puzzles one some times in attempting to guess at an age. As I have said, he is so cleanly of appearance that one hopes time and again he will not dip his finger in ink, and then rub it across his brow. It would spoil a perfect picture.

He has a long, straight nose, with a slight tilt to it, and gray eyes that have diamond colors in them, and a rather bushy pair of eyebrows.

A Tightly Closed Mouth

Governor Coolidge's mouth is a study in itself. It closes tightly when in repose. His lips are well formed, and one can always be certain he is going to hear something from them when they begin to twist slightly and move, still closed. This, you finally decide, is because he never says a thing until he is certain in just what words he will express himself. He is a man who doesn't talk and then think. As any policeman in Boston will tell you, he thinks first, then gives his orders.

He does not look away from you when he talks. He talks and looks steadily into your eyes, a trait many Governors and others do not possess. He is as honest in his expression as he is in his speeches. He is as honest in his demeanor as he is in his remark that "I certainly do like to get out and walk around the streets just to see the people." You can see honesty in his every act. He is just that sort of man. He is so honest that he instructs his secretary to tell persons (and there are thousands of them) seeking to see him for "just one minute" that he doesn't want to see them, because he hasn't time. No excuses made up of whole cloth for Calvin Coolidge. When the nomination turmoil settles down and he is more to himself he will see them. But now he will not, because he is too busy.

He has a chin with not a dimple in it, but a little indentation in the center at the bottom. He has a good, straight "jaw," as we say, that doesn't click nor snap nor jump. It just spells determination without having the meanness of a lot of strong "jaws."

Works Long Hours

In fact, everything about his dress is so simple and so elegant and so necessary and so in place that you wonder if he ever gets his trousers out of crease or his shirt soiled. He does. A man who comes to the executive offices of a state and works from 9 o'clock in the morning until 5:30 o'clock in the afternoon with a scant half hour at 1 o'clock off for luncheon wrinkles his clothing, all right, and does a lot of work you never know about or guess is being done.

And consider this: Calvin Coolidge, who now is well on the way to Washington, if we are to believe the predictions of his friends, lives in one half of a two-family house in Northampton, Mass., when he is at home. He pays $32 a month rent and has a three-room apartment in a hotel in Boston (not the best hotel in the city, either). He visits his old home near Plymouth, Vt., regularly each year and plows and stacks hay and rides horseback into the village for provisions for the week end. His wife and two young sons declare he is "a mighty fine father and husband."

And there you have something of the man the G. O. P. hopes to make the next Vice-President of the United States.

Senator Harding Is Well Liked by Those Who Know Him Best

(Continued from page one)

time and look at them. He was always interested in the family history. Well, he's making family history now, and I guess before he's through he'll make some for the country."

Caledonia is just a little country town about ten miles east of Marion. James W. Bolinger is the proprietor of the restaurant there. He cuts sandwiches and divides each pie (shipped from Marion every other day) into six sections. His wife does the cooking and his daughter waits on the counter and tables. Bolinger's recollection of the youth of Warren Harding creates a mental picture of a long-legged, rangy country lad riding astride a small jenny mule, his legs almost dragging in the dust of the road as he traveled to or from school.

One Who's Surprised

"Warren was a pretty smart boy," said Mr. Bolinger, wiping one hand on his apron and with the other twisting his mustache out of the right of way of a cup of coffee. "I 'spect everybody will say now that they always knew he was going to be a big man. That's human nature, but I got to admit he is a surprise to me. If you go across the street to see Mrs. Katherine Highly she can tell you a lot about him. She was friendly with his folks."

Mrs. Highly didn't have to be sought. She came panting up the brick sidewalk, her gray hair in strings and her gray house dress sleeves rolled to the elbows just as soon as she saw that a photograph was being made of the Dr. W. A. Crum residence. That is where old "Doc" Harding lived when he was Caledonia's physician, and Mrs. Highly just knew they were making the picture because it was the boyhood home of the next President.

"You just got to excuse me," began Mrs. Highly, "but this is washday. I saw you through the side window. My hands are all wet"—Then she ran glibly on into a series of anecdotes that had "come back" since the news from Chicago came to Caledonia via the railroad wire.

Paint on Her Floor

"Warren Harding painted my summer kitchen one year when he was about seventeen. It was a drab paint. I was in the kitchen baking cookies, and he spilled his pot of paint through the window on the kitchen floor. He was awful took back, but not so much as I was. He says: 'Now, Mrs. Highly, if you won't be mad I'll clean all that up good.' He did, too, and though I was mad I gave him some of the cookies. I just wish I could remember who it was that helped him with that painting.

"They say over in Marion that old Amos Kling, the banker—he's dead now—just raised fits when Warren up and married his daughter.

"Say, I've just thought of another thing about Warren. When he was a little fellow his grandmother put a penny in his hand and said, 'This is to buy a darning needle with.' Then she put another penny in his other hand and said, 'This is to buy you a stick of candy.' After a bit little Warren came back licking a stick of candy and crying at the same time. His grandmother asked him what was the matter and he said, 'Oh, I lost the penny for the darning needle.' Caledonia people still laugh about that. Well, I must ge back to my tubs," and Mrs. Highly disappeared indoors.

His Alma Mater Perished

When Dr. Harding moved his family from Caledonia to Marion, Warren was about eighteen and had a B. S. degree from Ohio Central College at Iberia, a few miles from Caledonia. There are more flags now flying in the village of Iberia in celebration of Harding's nomination than in the rest of the county.

The college passed out of existence soon after Harding was graduated, but the villagers are confident it was his college education that made it possible for him to gain national prominence. The college burned and none thought it worth while rebuilding.

Harding edited the college paper when he wasn't engaged in some prank and the favorite yarn of some of the old Iberians is about the Halloween Eve when young "Doc," as they called him, led a raid on the storehouse of the local undertaker, took a coffin and paraded through the streets with it.

That almost cost Harding his degree, but he survived this scandal and soon after graduating was teaching school at the white schoolhouse about one and a half miles out of Marion. He was a schoolmaster for about two terms and then his father arranged to have him "read" law with Stephen A. Court, the handsomest lawyer and the most persistent gambler in Marion.

Telling On the "Doc"

"It was the worst kind of a place to put a boy to study. Court was never bothered about his office," said Dick Crissinger, the leading Democratic lawyer of Marion a few days ago. "You see I went to school over in Caledonia with Harding. I was a few years older—I'm about sixty now—but I sat across the aisle from him. You've heard how he used to sit behind his geography and chew tobacco? I wouldn't tell you about that if you hadn't said you heard it elsewhere. I wouldn't want to make 'Doc' sore. I guess he won't care, though.

"He played in the band here in Marion, and then he got interested in 'The Pebble'—went to setting type. Jack Warwick, now a paragrapher on 'The Toledo Blade,' worked there also. The sheet was in a bad way financially, and these two finally gained ownership for a song, and by assuming responsibility for the paper's debts. It was just a small publication, about a fourth the size of a regular newspaper.

"I was reading law at the time, and sometimes I had to go there to try and collect money from the young publishers. Warwick decided he'd rather be city editor on a salary and Harding became sole owner, barring the creditors.

"I went down to Cincinnati Law School about that time. There I was a classmate of Ohio's other Senator, Mr. Pomerene. I guess it was while I was gone that Harding met the daughter of old Amos Kling, the wealthiest man in town. When I came home from Cincinnati they were about to be married. They went right ahead and defied the old man. Built their house first and were married in the parlor. Harding was always like that. Ready to take a chance. He is a wonderful bridge player. You must get Joe Matthews, of the Marion Lumber Company, to tell you about the band."

An Actor Once

Matthews is the Secretary of the Marion Lumber Company. Senator Harding is a director. They have been pals for many years now, and the friendship is warmer than ever. Leaning back in a swivel chair in his office next to the railroad tracks, coat, vest and collar hanging on a rack, this round-faced genial man with sparse gray hair began to chuckle the minute Harding's name was mentioned.

"Did you ever hear about the time he set out to be an actor? I'll tell you. Harding must have been about nineteen. A couple of fellows who said they were actors came up from Cincinnati. Their 'company' included two girls. They said they were going to start a stock company here in Marion and needed some local talent. Harding and I thought we qualified.

"We rehearsed two plays, and then went over to Murraysville, twenty-five miles from here, to put the show on. On the train going over I remember Harding sat whittling out pinwheels. We gave one performance. It was enough. That was the last of the stock company. We got out of Murraysville alive, though.

Blaine Hat Cost Him Job

"It was about that time we went down to the fair at Greenville, Ohio. Both Harding and I were in the Marion Silver Band. Charles Meader was the leader. He now lives in Chillicothe. Well, he went down to Greenville—it's near Dayton—and wrote us to come for a visit. Told us to be sure to wear our gray plug hats. This was in '84, during the Cleveland-Blaine campaign. I was a Democrat. I wore mine with a black band and Harling a white band. When the folks at Greenville saw those foot-high hats they turned in and gave us a royal time. I think Harding made a couple of Blaine speeches. When he came back—this was before he owned the paper—the Democratic proprietor fired him for wearing the Blaine hat around the office.

"Another time the band went to Findlay, Ohio, to play in a competition and Marion won the prize. I'll bet Harding won't be near so proud coming home with the Republican nomination as he was coming back with the prize cup the band won that day.

"We're going to try to get the members of the old band together to play at the station when Harding comes home. If we can still toot we'll play 'Doc Munger's Quickstep.' That was always his favorite. If you want to get a laugh out of Harding some time, just say 'We'll now play No. 47 in the old black book.' It was a kind of password with us, and just to hear it would send us into fits of laughter.

"When he was married I attended the wedding. I'll never forget the goose-pimples I had when the minister asked anybody to speak up if they knew any reason why they should not be married—you know the line. I ached with suspense until he resumed the ceremony. We were all sure old Amos Kling was going to pop in and make a scene. He thought Harding would never amount to a tinker's dam.

"I'm a Democrat, but you can bet I'm going to vote for Harding, and any Democrat who lives around here and don't vote for him ought to be ashamed of himself. Did I tell you Harding played the tenor horn in the band? I played the snare drum. E. K. Clark, a traveling salesman who lives here, played the tuba. I suspect all of Marion will attend both his inaugurations."

His Wife's Father

When Harding was striving for the nomination for Lieutenant Governor of Ohio he was introduced at Columbus to a couple of members of the State Board of Agriculture. He mentioned to them that his father-in-law had been a member of the board and identified him as Amos Kling.

"'A fine man,' said one of the board members.

"'Yes he-is,' agreed Harding, 'but we don't speak as we pass by. When I was a young fellow I borrowed a pair of shears and a paste-pot and started a newspaper. About that time I met Amos Kling's daughter. I thought she was pretty fine, and after a while I got her thinking the same way about me, but the old man thought I'd never amount to anything. When we married he sort of left us to our fate. I want to get this nomination for Lieutenant Governor to show the old man that his daughter did not make such a terrible mistake, after all.'

Forgiveness at Last

"It was some time after that, however, before Amos Kling began speaking to his son-in-law. Miss Abigail Harding, an English teacher in the Marion School, recalled that situation last Monday after she had returned to the frame dwelling, from which the ochre paint is peeling, where she lives with her father, the doctor. That same day when she entered her classroom her pupils had risen in their seats and clapped their hands because she was the sister of Warren Harding.

"'I just thought that if Amos Kling was alive to-day,' said Miss Harding, 'he'd probably admit that he made a mistake. Even so, they were good friends before he died, but he was mighty mad when he learned his daughter and Warren were building a house to be married in. I wish I could be sure he knows now that they are going to live in the White House.'"